
SECTION: BREASTFEEDING PROMOTION AND SUPPORT

SUBJECT: Breastfeeding Promotion and Support

ITEM: Use of Nipple Shields

Policy

The Local Agency (LA) shall ensure proper issuance and use of the nipple shield to support breastfeeding at the local level.

Required Procedures

I. Evaluation

- A. When an infant has difficulty latching and feeding at the breast, the LA may issue a nipple shield if:
 - 1. the situation is fully evaluated by an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC);
 - 2. all other interventions have failed and only rarely within the first 24 hours of life; and
 - 3. the mother receives frequent follow-up, initially, until the infant is gaining adequate weight and/or is weaned from the nipple shield.
- B. The IBCLC shall:
 - 1. ensure the proper nipple shield size, based on the width of the mother's nipple and size of the infant's mouth;
 - 2. check the nipple shield position; and
 - 3. assess the effectiveness of suckling and audible swallowing.

II. Instruct

- A. The IBCLC shall instruct the mother to wash the nipple shield in hot, soapy water, rinse well after each use and not to alter the shield in any way.

III. Follow up

- A. After issuing a nipple shield, the LA shall:

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1. arrange a follow up appointment within one week;
 2. weigh the infant at least weekly, initially, or more often if needed; and
 3. have the IBCLC provide instruction on shield weaning techniques when the infant is able to feed at the breast without the shield.

IV. Document

- A. The LA staff shall record assessment and treatment plan in participant's Integrated Statewide Information System (ISIS) record, in the Individual Nutrition Education Plan (INEP).

Issuance Criteria

- I. Thin, silicone nipple shields may be helpful when:
 - A. an infant has a weak or disorganized suck;
 - B. an infant has a short tongue, short frenulum or a high palate;
 - C. an infant is premature and unable to suck adequately;
 - D. milk transfer while breastfeeding is inadequate;
 - E. a mother has flat or inverted nipples that interfere with a proper latch;
 - F. when the infant does not open the mouth wide to achieve adequate latch;
 - G. the mother has an overactive letdown reflex;
 - H. the infant needs help in transitioning from the bottle to the breast;
 - I. the mother has very sore nipples and is about to give up on breastfeeding; or
 - J. the mother is more likely to initiate and continue breastfeeding with a nipple shield.

Guidelines

- I. If needed, provide instruction regarding proper pumping procedures and/or the use of supplementation.
- II. If unable to wean the infant from the shield and weight continues to improve (example 5-7 oz. per week), weight checks may stop after one month.

Authority

7 CFR 246.14 (c) (10)

Resources

[Contract Management Binder \(CMB\), Chapter 5, VI. Attachments, Allowable Costs, Breastfeeding Aids.](#)